# The Seed Sower.

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## *The Song and the Deed.*

There was never a song that was sung by thee,
But a sweeter one was meant to be.

There was never a deed that was grandly done,
But a greater was meant by some earnest one.

For the sweetest voice can never impart
The song that trembles within the heart.

And the brain and hand can never quite do
The thing that the soul has fondly in view.

And hence are the tears and the burden of pain,
For the shining goals are ever to gain.

And the real song is ne'er heard by man,
Nor the work ever done for which we plan.

But enough that a God can hear and see
The song and the deed that were meant to be!

—*Benjamin R. Bulkeley.*

## *Dear Hands.*

Roughened and worn with ceaseless toil and care,
No perfumed grace, no dainty skill had these;
They earned for whiter hands a jewelled ease,
And kept the scars unlovely for their share.
Patient and slow, they had the will to bear
The whole world's burdens, but no power to seize
The flying joys of life, the gifts that please,
The gold and gems that others find so fair.
Dear hands, where bridal jewel never shone,
Whereon no lover's kiss was ever pressed,
Crossed in unwonted quiet on the breast,
I see, through tears, your glory newly won,
The golden circlet of life's work well done,
Set with the shining pearl of perfect rest.

## *The Image with the Feet of Clay.*

(THE RUSSIAN DEFEAT).

A SERMON PREACHED ON SUNDAY, JUNE 4TH, 1905, BY THE REV. JOSEPH WOOD.

Daniel ii., 31, 34.—"Thou, O King, sawest, and behold a great image. This image, which was mighty, and whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the aspect thereof was terrible. As for the image, his head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces."

IN the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, writings in which the iron note of ethics is ever heard, much is said of the Word of the Lord, of God's voice speaking to men, of the Revelation of a divine will and purpose in the affairs of man. But the Word, Voice, and Revelation, is never associated with the Temple, the Shechinah, the Altar, the Ritual of Worship. It is not denied that God meets men and speaks to them in and through such things as these, and yet as is often pointed out, such things may serve only to close the ears of men to God's voice, and to stifle the word which God is speaking. Prophet after

prophet emphasises the fact that forms, ritual, temple-worship have not seldom deadened the hearts of their countrymen towards God. When men look for God in the sacrifices of the altar, in the incense of the temple, and in appointed forms, they fail to find Him. They must look for God, the prophets teach, in the march of events, in the deeds of men, in the actual life and ongoings of peoples' and nations, rather than in ecstacies of worship and punctilios of observance. We are to hear the voice of God in our politics, in our daily relations with men, in the conduct of our business, in the struggle of our hearts with temptation, in the works which fill our days and the interests which fill our newspaper, in the events of history and the daily procession of the world's affairs. For. unless we hear the word of the Lord in these things, and their like, we do not hear it at all. God reveals Himself not in the temple only or chiefly, nor on Sabbath days, nor in ordained forms, nor in zeal for a creed, but wherever and in whatever life is most real, thrilling, quickening, and interesting.

It is this which makes history, whether of ancient days or of our own generation, so exciting and interesting. Carlyle says in a note to one of Cromwell's speeches in Parliament, "The Bible of every nation is its own history." This note is drawn from Carlyle by Cromwell's constant insistence that we must ever be turning from form and ritual to study God's will and ways in history. Says Cromwell in that famous speech, "What are all our histories, but God, manifesting Himself, that He hath spoken, and tumbled down, and trampled upon everything that He hath not planted." Cromwell was a diligent student of the great Hebrew prophets, who had taught him that national religion is not in hierarchies, and churches, and altars, but in the reverential acknowledgment of God's hand in common life; in the admiration and effort after moral progress; in the stirring of conscience when we see wrong, tyranny, injustice; in the expectation when evil abounds that God will bring justice and truth back again, if not by the pleadings of His grace, then by the stern punishments of His hand.

It is this teaching which makes Hebrew prophecy the inspiration of national reform, national justice, national ethics. In the deeds and lives of men, in national events, in the struggles of statesmen and soldiers, in the rising and falling of nations about them, the Prophets saw as men had never seen before, as they have never seen more clearly since, the principles and the moral law by which God rules on earth, the manifestation of His eternal justice, the downfall of the evil He hates, and the victory of the good He loves. The often-quoted lines of Milton best describe the prophets:—

> As men divinely taught, and better teaching,
> The solid rules of civil government,
> In their majestic, unaffected style,
> Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome.
> In them is plainest taught and easiest learnt,
> What makes a nation happy and keeps it so,
> What ruins kingdoms and lays cities flat.

No one can read the prophets without noting their passion for righteousness, their hatred of injustice, their championship of the poor and wronged, their exultant cry over the downfall of the great unrighteous kingdoms which in turn threatened the life of Israel, their denunciations of the selfish, the luxurious, the insolent, the frivolous, the cruel of their own nation. So in the great crises of national life, whether in England under Cromwell, or Scotland under Knox, whether in the Netherlands or Massacheusetts or Geneva, men have turned to the Old Testament for light and leading, and have found it to be an inspiration of courage and hope to their hearts, as well as a lamp to their feet. For the old Testament, in this so different from the New where all the stress is on the individual, deals with the life of a nation, and is full of national questions, problems, difficulties, warnings, lessons. To the Old Testament men have ever turned when they felt the need of instruction in the great things of national righteousness.

Nor have they turned in vain. The laws of Right and Wrong so difficult to see at times in the individual life are writ bold and large on the pages of history, and the prophets open our eyes to read what is written. We may

fail to see the moral meaning, bias and force in the little facts of our lives, but we can hardly fail to see them when we ponder on the history of nations. What would a man know of the sea standing an hour or two by its waters in some small bay? Could he suppose that there was anything but idle chance in its little eddies, tiny currents, miniature waves, and floating straws? But let him get some adequate idea of the great ocean itself in its unceasing ebb and flow, and he will see clearly how here is no chance, but the sway of mighty and invisible laws. The individual life is like that little bay, not that its movements are by chance, but that on so small a scale it is difficult always to trace the majestic presence of law. But on the great scale of national life, the element of chance or accident disappears. Somebody has said that if Cleopatra's nose had been half an inch shorter or longer, or if a certain general's horse had not stumbled, or if on a critical occasion the wind had not changed from east to west, the history of the world might have been different. People forget that great events do not spring from trivial causes. The great crises in human affairs, the great movements and issues are not brought about by accidents. Such things may be signs, straws which show the way the tide is flowing; but the straws do not account for the tide. The great tidal waves of retribution overwhelming at last every nation which forgets the eternal distinctions of right and wrong, are never the result of chance. In these we hear that voice which every true historian has been proclaiming aloud, that for every "false word or unrighteous deed, for insult and oppression, for lust and vanity, the price has to be paid at last. Truth and justice alone endure and live. Falsehood and injustice may be long-lived, but doomsday comes to them at last"—in the invasion of Rome by the Goths, in destruction of the Spanish Armada, in the French Revolution, in Russian disasters, and other terrible ways.

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During the past twelve months, and especially during the past week, we have been living through a series of events which brought forcibly to my mind this passage from the book of Daniel.

More than once in human story has the dream of Nebuchadnezzar with its interpretation by Daniel been fulfilled. The great empire, with its head of gold, and body of silver, and thighs of brass, and legs of iron, resting after all on feet of clay, has gone down before some smaller people, which, like a rock from the mountain, fell upon the feet of clay, and brought the mighty power, which threatened all the world, to the ground. The downfall of Babylon and Rome in ancient days, the downfall of the Bourbon dynasty in modern days, are instances of magnificent empires dazzling the eyes of man by their wealth and splendour, terrorising the world by their armies, yet as the events proved, resting upon unsound foundations, even upon feet of clay, overturned at last by a nation they had only despised. Never has this been more strikingly illustrated than in the events of the last few days, in which we have seen an unparalleled victory gained over one of the proudest and most powerful empires of the world, by a people so obscure and insignificent, as it seemed, that it could only be spoken of with contempt, when it presumed to measure itself with the Colossus of the East.

Sometimes, in thinking of the great days of old, we almost envy the men who lived in those stirring and dramatic events when history was in the making, and gigantic forces came together in the clash of arms. I would have you realise that we are living in just such a gigantic period of human affairs, when we see an ancient empire smitten to the dust, and a new empire coming swiftly to the front, so that the face of the world is largely changed. History never witnessed a more dramatic or a more appaling victory at sea, than that of last Sunday. While here we were worshipping in quiet and peace, there the greatest naval battle of the world was being fought out; powerful ironclads sent to the bottom, thousands of lives perishing in the flame and flood, the whole naval power of a mighty nation swept out of existence at a blow. It is an event which arrests the attention; which fastens on the mind; which makes the most frivolous among us serious minded. It is so pregnant

with far-reaching possibilities of change in the world's affairs, that all men look on with wonder. The matter of it seems inexhaustible; its consequences beyond all calculation. The rise of the Japanese into the rank of one of the great powers of the world, puts a new complexion on all the problems of the East, which can no longer be exploited by the West for its own aggrandisement. We shall hear no more of the Kaiser's "mailed fist!" Japan has placed the East on a footing of equality with the West.

Yet that is not the first thought which seizes the mind but rather the awful retribution that has overtaken a brutal and tyrannical government. If all history is a revelation of the Divine Justice, here surely we see on a vast scale the flashing of her sword, and the terror of her rebuke. Russia is almost the solitary survivor in modern times of those ancient world-empires, proud, luxurious, disdainful, repacious, tyrannical, which the prophets denounced and whose end they foretold. The very title of her ruler, "Czar," comes down from the Nebuchadnez*zar*, Belshaz*zar*, Shah, Cæs*ar*, all forms of one name, and which signified the rule of a despot, assuming the position of a god on earth. As a god he lords it over men. All authority centres in him. The lives, the fortunes, the destinies of his subjects are in his hands. It is a position and a power no human being, however highly gifted, is capable of holding and wielding with wisdom, truth, justice, and humanity. Always it means a government resting on military force, a people kept in ignorance and subjection, denied any real freedom, shorn of every shred of political rights, robbed and trampled on for the enriching of the select circle surrounding the throne. Also it always means corruption bribery, and rottenness in every department of the state, public plunder, everyone seeking his own advantage; the decay of patriotism, the growth into foul luxuriance of all the poisonous weeds of cruelty, greed and oppression by the governing class. And so, although the image is gigantic and splendid, with head of gold, and body of silver, and thighs of brass, its feet are feet of clay. With all its magnificence, it rests on no foundation of the people's welfare, happiness, and goodwill. It rests on feet of clay, and almost at a touch it is overturned. Once again the prophetic warning is uttered in the events passing before our eyes, "*The nation and kingdom that will not serve Thee shall perish.*"

The sure sign of coming ruin in such an empire is the degradation, ignorance, and misery of its common people. It was so in the days of the prophets. Why did Babylon fall? How was it that powerful empire came to naught? For a simple reason, replies the prophet. Because in Babylon a man was *not* accounted more precious than the golden wedge of Ophir. It was the principle of Babylon that he should be counted far less precious; for the sake of the splendour and the luxury and the glory of its ruler and his satellites, the human being was held cheap, and ruthlessly sacrificed. Nothing in such empires is *so* cheap as human life. All the great judgments on the ancient world-kingdoms recorded by the prophets set forth the truth that in the eye of heaven a man *is* more precious, infinitely more precious, than the golden wedge, and we shall entirely miss the significance of the awful disasters that have fallen upon Russia unless we see in them the re-assertion of that forgotten truth. Russia has never realised that the true wealth of a nation, its true veins of gold, its impregnable fortress, is in the hearts of its people, in their welfare, happiness, virtue, enlightenment, affection, and honour.

* * * * * *

Brethren, these events are full of warning and instruction for us. We cannot stand apart from the great drama of our times as if it had nothing to do with us. Nor is it for us to assume the attitude of the Pharisee towards other nations, and say: "Lord, we thank thee that we are not as they." There is a worship of wealth, a growing luxury, a contempt for poverty, an extravagance in all classes in our midst, which we may well view with alarm. There is an insane competition among the rulers of the West, resulting in costlier and costlier armies, in larger and larger navies, in an expenditure on preparation for war, which is already a frightful burden on the common people, and which, while it threatens the poor with still greater poverty, offers, as it always

does, a boundless field for official corruption. There is, moreover, among the great powers of the West, a contempt for smaller peoples and nations, a disregard for their rights, a tendency finally to swallow them up, which is full of moral danger. Finland and Poland, and even the Philippines, tell a mournful tale. What is happening before our eyes is God speaking to us in experience, and telling us that nations, even as individuals, will be judged by the universal moral law, that every departure from justice, veracity, and humanity, is as a leak in the ship of state, which cannot be staunched. What we see is the moral law once again asserting itself against all those who would teach that truth, magnanimity, and righteousness, which are good in private life, have little or no place in national affairs; that the greed, and selfishness, and violence, we condemn in the individual, are to be excused in the nation, and that pledges of honour are one thing for parents and tradesmen, but another thing for kings and statesmen. This is a common enough creed, but it is a shameless atheism for all that, and always ends in tyranny and downfall. Let us as a people have neither path nor lot in any teaching, practice, or tendency that makes light of the moral law in public affairs, or ever sets it aside on grounds of expediency. Let us hate the infidelity which thinks a nation is rich for its wealth rather than its truth and justice. Truth and justice, righteousness and humanity, the spirit of a people where every son of the soil is a lover of his country, because his country stands for right and freedom, these things count for more than great wealth, vast territory, proud armies, mighty Armadas. What a glorious lie the present war has given to the cynical saying that Providence is on the side of the biggest battalions. All history teaches the same lesson. However long-delayed, however often-defeated, the moral law at last vindicates itself, and justice is seen to be seated on the throne of the universe, and righteousness appears as no mere dogma of the Temple but as the greatest of realities both in personal and in national life. All unrighteousness though its head be of gold and its body of silver and its legs of iron, rests on feet of clay.

## *In Vanity Fair.*

THROUGH Vanity Fair, in days of old,
There passed a maiden with locks of gold,
And a pedlar opened his tempting pack,
Crying: 'O my pretty lass! what d'ye lack?
Here 's many a ware
Costly and rare.
Come, buy—oh, come, buy!
In Vanity Fair.'

'Silks and satins are not for me;
Lace is for damsels of high degree;
The lads would laugh in our country town
If I came clad in a broidered gown;
But yet there's a ware,
Precious and rare,
I fain would buy me
In Vanity Fair.'

'Pray, sell me, sir, from your motley store,
A heart that will love me for evermore,
That, whether the world shall praise or blame,
Through sorrow or joy will be still the same.
'Tis the only ware
For which I care,
Mid all the treasures
In Vanity Fair.'

'Much it grieves me, O lassie dear,'
The pedlar said; 'but I greatly fear
The hearts that loved in the old sweet way
Have been out of fashion this many a day;
And gilded care
Is all the ware
You will get for your money
In Vanity Fair.'

*Florence Tylee.*

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The poorest outward condition will do nothing to obliterate the solemnity from life. Nay, of nothing may we be more sure than this: that, if we cannot sanctify our present lot, we could sanctify no other. Our heaven and our Almighty Father and there or nowhere.—*James Martineau.*

Love does not hesitate. Love leaves all and follows.—*J. F. Clarke.*

In all matters of eternal truth the soul is before the intellect: the things of God are spiritually discerned. You know truth by being true: you recognize God by being like him.—*F. W. Robertson.*

## A Quiet Street!

It is a great mistake to suppose that quiet can be found in the so-called quiet street. Anyone whose nerves and whose work require an atmosphere of silence will be much better suited in a downright noisy thoroughfare than in the tempting but deceptive quietude where there are only occasional noises. It is the fact that they are occasional that makes them so distressing. The ear soon becomes accustomed to the continuous and subdued roar of a main street through which the traffic forms a constant stream. Further, this constant undertone is a kind of sea in which particular noises are drowned. The sharp, jarring edges of occasional or sudden sounds are softened by the prevailing hum, and barrel-organs, street cries, German bands, costermongers' yells, are more or less swallowed up in that ground bass which, in a very little time, the ear does not notice. But in a quiet street any one of these sounds is painfully distinct, and is felt as the beating of a nerve. For half-an-hour there will be a delicious silence in which the student gets on gloriously, and then he jumps with a howl as one of those monstrosities, a piano-organ, bursts forth under his window with some popular jig. He shakes his fist frantically at the grinning Italian, who slowly parades the street from one end to the other until he has exhausted his repertoire. Presently there is a silence, again to be broken in five minutes, by a loud, harsh, resonant voice, which, inconceivably powerful, and at the same time inarticulate, is simply demoniacal—ch-ii-e-ee-rrr-ss, to-oo m-yee-n-d! There, that is the most spelling can do to describe this hideous howl. Then there comes another "flash of silence" as Sydney Smith called it, broken up by a thundering noise as if a house had fallen, which you find to be a load of coal shot down at your neighbour's gate, and for the next hour there is the lumbering and jolting of the wheelbarrow as it is trundled to and fro along the entry. When that comes to an end and you have settled down once again to work and are just polishing up your finest sarcasm, or adjusting your microscope for a nice experiment, there comes a blast as if the orchestra of pandemonium had broken loose. It is the weekly visit of the Germans with the clarionet that is always flat and the cornet that is always sharp. You get into a noble rage with all Germans, you confound the Kaiser, you long for a dynamite bomb to be thrown into the midst of those stupid, stolid, ear-splitting, braying musicians, you curse the man who invented brass instruments, you denounce Jubal and his lyre; but it is all of no avail. The only relief is to go out for a walk. So it goes on all day, intervals of silence followed by sharp, jarring noises, every one of which is so painfully distinct because there is no under-current of sound, as in a main thoroughfare, to take off the edges.

A lively and ingenious writer has suggested that if Mr. Darwin be right, that man is only an improved monkey, we may reasonably expect that in the course of the ages evolution will do as much to improve the breed of man as it has in the past. Among the amendments which it seems might be desirable in such a case to introduce into the human form, would be that of the addition of ear-lids. We have already eye-lids, shutters we can draw down at pleasure whenever we want to protect ourselves from ugly and painful sights. Ear-lids would be quite as useful. How convenient in church when the preacher is on a tack we don't approve, when he is exposing *our* little weaknesses or fault, when, as the children say in their games, he is getting *warm*—I say how convenient to be able to draw the ear-lids and shut out the disagreeable subject. What a boon ear-lids would be in sickness when everything depends on keeping the patient quiet. And there is many a student, literary man, scientific observer, who would give a good round sum to anyone who should provide him with such convenient appendages.

Miss Cobbe tells us that the old Mexicans had an idol called Intoxcoatltinikltcoatlti, who had an enormous golden ear, to indicate how remarkably sharp he was of hearing. Poor, unfortunate Intoxcoatl! One may pity him, as Sydney Smith did the giraffe for his liability to endure three yards of sore throat. How he must have longed for ear-lids. What a fearful nuisance his sharp hearing must have been to him. It may be a calamity to be deaf, but it is a calamity which has plenty of compensation. Pope paid a pretty compliment to a lady of his acquaintance when he sang—

"Has she no faults, then? Envy cried, sir.
Yes, she has one, I must aver;
When all the world conspires to praise her
The woman's deaf, and does not hear."

But how much more convenient it would be to be deaf when the world censures one, and criticises and "damns with faint praise." It is said deaf people always hear any remarks about themselves; but if we are deaf at all it is just to those personal remarks we should turn an obstinate ear. And then what a blessing not to hear the jar, the rattle, the squeak, the howl, the yell, and all the hideous noises of a quiet street!

There is one other nuisance of a quiet street which we mention not without trepidation, but which, for our own part we have found more annoying than anything else—in the way of noise. We refer to the almost hourly tinkling of the church bell. If the quiet street happens to be in the neighbourhood of a church with High church proclivities and where the ideal of religion seems to be the multiplication of services, then the man who has gone there in search of silence, or the sick patient who needs calm and repose, will be driven, if not mad, at least, into a frightful bad temper, half-a-dozen times a day. Nothing is more irritating. The writer of this paper can stand a good deal of promiscuous noise, but this unseasonable dinging of the church bell acts like a nutmeg-grater on his brain. There are limits to human patience—in spite of Job. Job was patient, but "did Job ever lose a barrel of such ale?" No, Job after all was never tormented, when he wanted to meditate on his dung-heap, by bells for matins, and bells for vespers, and bells for complines, and nones, and beads, or whatever else it may be. It was all very well in the dark ages, before clocks and watches were invented, and when the church bell was the only means of knowing that the hour for prayers had arrived. But who in these days wants a bell tolled to tell him the time of day? And what single being ever goes to church because he hears that monotonous, melancholy dinging? If it is meant as an invitation to enter, it is as *malapropos* as a text of Scripture we once saw engraved over the door of a little Bethel in Cumberland—"Flee from the wrath to come." Of course there may be some deep, mystic, esoteric significance in the tolling of the bell before the entry of the priest into which we have not been initiated. Otherwise it is difficult to see why the clergy should be so indifferent to the comfort of all the sickly people in the neighbourhood as to insist upon setting their nerves ajar so many times a day, or why they should provoke unregenerate people like ourselves into the use of strong language and the display of a reprehensible temper. But it is another argument for choosing a house in a downright noisy street if quiet is the desideratum, for in such a street the painful *ting* of the bell is softened by the sea of noise which is always flowing.

S. K.

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For to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labour.—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

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Demand of every common thing of life, whether it be your body or your money or your daily experience, that it shall bloom into fine results in your own soul and in your influence on the world.—*Phillips Brooks.*

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Let the Great Shepherd lead; and by winding ways, not without green pastures and still waters, we shall climb insensibly, and reach the tops of the everlasting hills, where the winds are cool and the sight is glorious.—*James Martineau.*

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This is the beginning of all Gospels—that the kingdom of heaven is at hand just where *we* are. It is just as near us as our work is, for the gate of heaven for each soul lies in the endeavour to do that work perfectly.—*William C. Gannett.*

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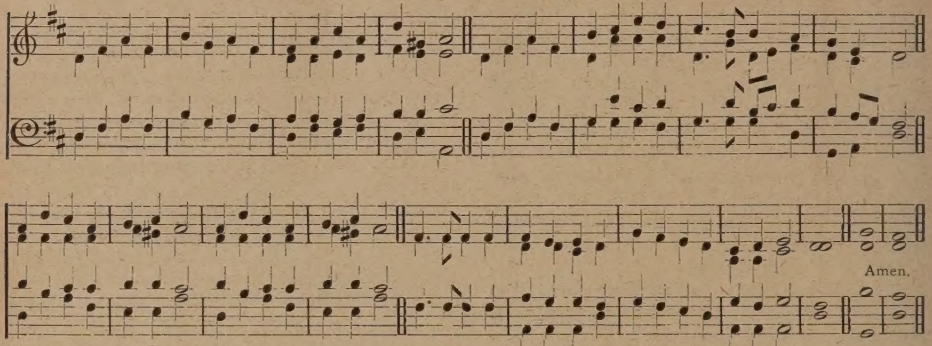
He only really lives whose interests go beneath the surface, who has gone up into the heights and down into the depths, whose heart beats in unionism with the great heart of humanity, who weeps for the world's pain and suffers for its sin, who has tasted the fulness of unselfish love, who has swelled with mighty hopes, who has burned with divine inspiration.—*C. J. Perry.*

## Come, Immortal Lord of Gladness.

Solibull. (From "The New Hymnal.") S. K.




*f* 1 Come, immortal Lord of Gladness!
From the immeasurable height
Scatter all our sins and sadness,
Move upon our hearts in light!
*mf* All-pervading God, whose love
Joins us here with those above,
Make us now Thy new creation,
Sanctify this congregation.

*p* 2 Come and bring with Thee Thy treasure,—
Love and meekness, joy and peace,
Gentleness that knows no measure,
Truths that cumbered hearts release,
Purity, and faith in right,
Thirst for holiness, and light;
Hear our contrite supplication,
Arm for life this congregation.

*f* 3 Come, abide in us for ever;
Build Thy city in our heart
On Thy righteousness, and never
From its citadel depart.
*p* Fill us with Thy holy awe,
*cr* Make us prophets of Thy law,
Worthy of our high vocation
In the world's great congregation.

Stopford A. Brooke.

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## A Nursery Song.

Oh, Peterkin Pout and Gregory Grout
Are two little goblins black.
Full oft from my house I've driven them out,
But somehow they still come back.
They clamber up to the baby's mouth,
And pull the corners down;
They perch aloft on the baby's brow,
And twist it into a frown.

*Chorus.*

And one says, "Must!" and t'other says, "Can't!"
And one says, "Shall!" and t'other says, "Shan't!"
Oh, Peterkin Pout and Gregory Grout,
I pray you now from my house keep out!

But Samuel Smile and Lemuel Laugh
Are two little fairies light:
They're always ready for fun and chaff,
And sunshine is their delight.
And, when they creep into baby's eyes,
Why, there the sunbeams are;
And, when they peep through her rosy lips,
Her laughter rings near and far.

*Chorus.*

And one says "Please!" and t'other says, "do!"
And both together say, "I love you!"
So, Lemuel Laugh and Samuel Smile,
Come in, my dears, and tarry awhile!

—*Laura B. Richards.*

## The Essex Hall Lecture.

PROFESSOR HENRY JONES

On "The Immortality of the Soul in Tennyson and Browning."

THE event of the Whit-week meetings of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association was the lecture by Professor Jones. He had chosen a most attractive subject, which he treated with such a power of insight, beauty of diction, charm of manner, and force of reasoning, heightened by many delightful touches of humour, that although it occupied an hour and forty minutes in delivery, the audience did not feel that it was a word too long. It was, indeed, a very remarkable exposition of the faith held by our two great modern poets. We are glad to learn that it will be published as speedily as possible in book form. We can only give our readers a few extracts in the hope of whetting their appetites for more, and so sending them to the book itself.

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"The immortality of the soul is one of those grave matters on which men of refinement are naturally reticent. They break their silence, as a rule, only when they are deeply moved. So it was with Plato when the death of Socrates led him to speak of immortality as almost no other has done. The death of Arthur Hallam stirred the depths of Tennyson's nature, and brought the wild grief, the sustained reflection, and the solemn joy of 'In Memoriam;' and though Browning was habitually less reticent, and the speculative impulse in him was more daring, so that he often spoke of the future life during his fifty years of poetic production, it was the death of his young friend at La Saissiaz which stirred his knightly spirit to put on its armour, to challenge his own faith, to dare his own doubts of immortality."

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The great thing that impressed the student in Tennyson and Browning was the fulness of their belief in the immortality of the soul. If they did ever really doubt its truth, which was very questionable, doubt only shook the torpor of assurance from their creed; it left the assurance itself more strong and fixed, and its roots travelled deeper into their experience, and intertwined itself more vitally around it as their life matured to its close.

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Had Browning and Tennyson any right to such a triumphant conviction? What gave it to their poets? On what grounds did they hold it? What was the validity of those grounds? The answer given, both by Tennyson and Browning, was that those grounds were not intellectual.

> Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O my son,
> Nor canst thou prove the world thou movest in.
>
> * * * * * *
>
> Thou canst not prove thou art immortal—no,
> Nor yet that thou are mortal . . .
> For nothing worthy proving can be proven,
> Nor yet disproven; wherefore thou be wise.
> Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,
> And cling to Faith beyond the forms of Faith!

And so Tennyson declared:—

> We have but faith; we cannot know,
> For knowledge is of things we see.

(On the audience cheering these quotations, Professor Jones humorously remarked that he hoped before he had finished to make them see that Tennyson was entirely wrong in the argument—the agnostic argument of these lines.)

* * * * * *

What must they say to that contention? The solution of the great question by an Agnostic faith was much too easy to be right. It healed the wounds of the soul too slightly; they bled afresh, when touched by doubt. They had neither the right nor the power to be satisfied with a faith that was divorced from reason. They were entitled to take stronger ground, and the two poets, in spite of all they said about knowledge, took stronger grounds. So far from ousting reason from that great quest of Immortality, they had employed it as their guide; and reason, so far from failing them in their hour of need, was just that which had gained for them those splendid convictions which they attributed to faith. Theirs was the "faith of reason." Reason selected the elements it contained, and compacted them into a consistent and self-sustained whole. Their doubt of reason and despair of knowledge arose, he believed, from confusion as to their nature, and to that confusion they must attribute much of that acknowledged and unacknowledged Agnosticism

of this and other times, which was the insecure refuge of intellectual despair.

* * * * * *

This world's no blot for us
Nor blank : it means intensely and means good.

O world, as God has made it ! All is beauty ?
And knowing this is love, and love is duty,
What further may be sought for, or declared ?

Who told Browning that ? His heart ? Yea, verily, but his heart made wise by much reflection ; the theoretical and practical reason which built his life. Such was the poet's "faith of reason;" analogous in detail, identical in method, with that which works in the construction of the sciences and even in that knowldge of common things which lies at the basis and guides the whole of our practical outward life. In judging of Nature they remembered that man must not be left out Nature implied man, and man in virtue of his spiritual qualities, especially of his love, implied God, and God, who was most of all God in His love, brought with Him all that man could need, and amongst these "Immortality, or something better, if better there can be." Such in the last resort was the argument of the two poets for the great hypothesis, which, like all science, must remain hypothesis to the end of time, but an hypothesis "surer than any particular fact, for it supplies the meaning of every fact."

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Everything harmonizes with me which is harmonious to thee, O Universe. Nothing for me is too early nor too late which is in due time for thee. Everything is fruit to me which thy seasons bring, O Nature ; from thee are all things, to thee all things return.—*M. Antoninus.*

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Let us learn to be content with what we have. Let us get rid of our false estimates ; set up all the higher ideals,—a quiet home ; vines of our own planting ; a few books full of the inspiration of genius ; a few friends worthy of being loved, and able to love us in turn ; a hundred innocent pleasures that bring no pain or remorse ; a devotion to the right that will never swerve ; a simple religion, empty of all bigotry, full of trust and hope and love ; and to such a philosophy this world will give up all the empty joy it has.—*David Swing.*

## Where you are.

For a long time it has been known that the vast body of the Amazon River flowing out into the ocean keeps the water fresh many leagues from the shore ; but every mariner is not aware of that fact, and an old story is that a ship sailing in those waters hoisted a signal of distress, saying that the crew were out of water and dying of thirst. By repeated answers to their appeal for help the captain of a passing ship caused them to drop their buckets into the water they were sailing through, and there they found what they needed. A well-known speaker made great use of this story on a recent occasion, in his advice to men to drop their buckets where they were, take things as they found them, and do the best they could with that which was right at hand. No better advice was ever given.

It has been borne in upon us lately, while hearing complaints of the church, of society, of the times, of the world in general that the defect is often in those who claim that their lives are hard and their work a failure. Let them drop their buckets where they are and use what they have to work with : let them put heart and hope, courage and a sound mind, into the opportunities that are given them, no matter what they are, and good will come of it right speedily. There is no village in the land that will not give to a worker of the right sort full occupation of the best kind. There is not a church within our knowledge which might not give any one fit to do the work full occupation for heart and mind, so that his days should be full of work worth the doing, with rewards following hard after.

Let any man or woman, no matter where, in the right spirit and with good purpose and a sound mind, take the work that comes to hand and do it with hope and courage, and a conspicuous success will follow When a preacher complains that he can do nothing because there are so many sinners in his congregation, he seems to forget what he was sent for. When one says there is no hope for an honest man in politics, he confesses that he has not power to stand by his principles and through them lead and master other men. If in society there is found no good thing, it would be well for one who feels the lack to keep the knowledge of it to himself. It was long ago said that he who says that all men are

bad, convicts no one but himself. He is included in the all, and if he speaks sincerely can only speak out of his own consciousness.

There is a kind of overweening conceit of self, that inflamed sense of one's own personality, for which we have invented the word "personitis," which is at the root of half the complaints that fill the air in these pessimistic times. It is considered a sign of sagacity to detect the evil in the world. No one but fools are supposed to be much impressed by the idea that virtue is increasing and that the world is getting on to better things. "I am right and all the world is wrong," is the secret thought of many.

If one says that on the whole rich men and women, in spite of the vicious oddities of a few and the silly excesses of others are making a better use of wealth than at any time before in the history of the world, he is accused of being a time server and of toadying to rich men. If one says that commerce is a great civilizer and peacemaker, and that the commercial spirit, even in its lowest estate, is on the whole opposed to war and makes for the good of mankind, he is accused of having blunted sensibilities, low aims, and lack of sympathy with ideal ends.

And so it goes. But after all they who are doing the real work and getting on to better things are those who drop their buckets where they are, take the good as they find it, and do their best to increase it. In religion they are the inspirers; in poetry they are the singers who mount up on wings; in public life they are the steadfast pioneers and founders who make history to be remembered and recorded, they are the social workers who are bringing all men into closer relations for nobler ends.

## The Nervous Origin of Colds.

UNDUE exposure to cold and damp is the only source of colds or catarrhs, in the limited estimation of popular opinion; and when it has provided stout boots, comfortable wraps, and serviceable umbrella, and a macintosh, that authority has furnished a full equipment to beat off the unwelcome complaint. When, as often happens, a cold is contracted in spite of these precautions, popular opinion is puzzled beyond measure how to account for the remarkable circumstance.

Cold, however, is not the only factor in the production of catarrh. There is a collateral cause, and a most important one, in certain depressed conditions of the nervous system, which is too little known and appreciated. In healthy conditions of the nervous system, provided reasonable precautions are taken against cold, there is enough vitality in the organism to resist its injurious influence. The nervous system is, in fact, the guardian, controller, and prime regulator of animal heat or body temperature, and its slightest failure to fulfil its responsible duties—the least relaxation of its constant viligance – renders us liable to fall a prey to cold.

The following suppositious cases will afford an illustration. An individual, who habitually drives about in an open conveyance with perfect freedom from catarrh, happens on one occasion to fall asleep when he is out, and the very next day has a cold. The explanation of the phenomenon is to be found in the fact, that during sleep, nervous energy is lowered, and the system therefore less able to withstand the injurious effects of cold. If we assume that the individual was also in a state of intoxication at the time, the damage done by cold would be more serious, as the depression from alcohol is superadded to that of sleep. It is, therefore, not surprising to find that inflammation of the lungs is frequently contracted under such circumstances. We instinctively acknowledge the nervous depression during sleep, by taking the precaution to throw a rug over the knees before our forty winks on the dining-room sofa.

A timid woman comes home one night pale and ghastly with fright, having encountered a spectre clad in white, which she calls a 'ghost.' In a day or two she develops a cold, for which she cannot in any way account. Fear acts as a depressant to the nervous system, crippling its powers of resisting the action of cold; hence the phrase, 'shivering with fear.' Similarly, innumerable events of daily life tend to irritate, depress, or excite the nerves, and render them unfit for maintaining the body-temperature against the fluctuations of weather and climate. During these unguarded moments, a trifling exposure to cold or damp is sufficient to induce catarrh. It

is desirable, therefore, that it should be generally known that stout boots, umbrellas, and wraps, though excellent preservatives in their way, are not by any means the only precautionary measures to be adopted; that we must endeavour to strengthen the nervous system, if it be defective; and that, when we are compelled to expose ourselves to cold or wet when the nerves are depressed from temporary causes, such as fatigue, anxiety, grief, worry, fear, dyspepsia, or ill-humour, we should be specially careful to guard against cold.

Let us now dissect the morbid condition known as catarrh, and verify, if we can, the theory of its nervous origin. What is a cold? To answer this question we must first explain what is meant by animal heat. Man is what is known as a warm-blooded animal, that is, he possesses the capacity under all circumstances of maintaining an average uniform temperature. Whether he live in the frost-bound Arctic regions or in the burning deserts of Central Africa, the heat of the blood is the same. In summer and winter alike (if we except, perhaps, certain abnormal states of the body due to the excitation or depression of the vital processes in various diseases), the average temperature of the human body is 98·4° Fahrenheit. Now, this is a remarkable fact, as, in view of the peculiar source from which animal heat is derived, namely, from the combustion of used-up tissue with the oxygen of inspired air, it stands to reason that the heat of the blood cannot remain constant for five minutes together as with every movement of our muscles we add coals to the human fire; and the regulation of all our movements, so as to preserve a uniform temperature, would be an utter impossibility. How, then, is the object achieved? The superfluous heat is disposed of by conduction and radiation in the capillaries of the skin, and by evaporation through the sweat glands and air-passages; and when there is no superfluous heat to dispose of, the skin contracts to prevent evaporation of moisture from the surface. Thus when we exert ourselves, there is increased waste of tissue, and accordingly we both pant and perspire. When we are cold, on the other hand, the skin is very far from being moist, and contracts, presenting what is called the 'gooseskin' appearance. Now, these functions are under the immediate control of the nervous system. Cold acts on the latter in such a way that the vessels supplying the skin are constricted, and the flow of blood to the surface checked, loss of heat by conduction, radiation, and evaporation being thus prevented; while heat, on the other hand, relaxes the blood-vessels and favours the escape of heat from the body. It will thus be seen what an important part the nervous system plays in the maintenance of animal heat.

Whenever, owing to any derangement of the nervous system, the perfect maintenance of animal heat fails to be carried out, disorder ensues, the mildest form of which is a catarrh, namely, the blocking up of the skin or outer surface of the body, with the consequent transference of the excretion to the mucous or inner surface. The deleterious matter which ought to have been removed by the skin, irritates the blood by its retention there, and ultimately expends itself by the nose and throat For example, if the nervous system be feeble, sweating would probably be induced, and a consequent loss of heat, irrespective of the needs of the body; in which case a cold would most probably follow. As a fact, there are many people with feeble nerves who readily perspire in the coldest weather, and are in consequence liable to frequently recurring colds. The nervous origin of colds also furnishes us with a clue to its treatment in the early stages. The whole history of a cold shows it to be essentially and primarily a state of collapse, demanding early recourse to a stimulating plan of treatment. There is no more dejected mortal than a patient in the first stage of cold, and both his physical and mental condition point to nervous collapse. Hence, we believe the great success of camphor and ammonia inhalations in the early stage. E.

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"Make me patient, kind and gentle,
Day by day;
Teach me how to live more nearly
As I pray."

One can go through his work or shirk it. One can consider his neighbour or neglect him. One can repress the fever-fit of impatience or give it wild way. And the perpetual presence of such a choice leaves no hour without guidance—*George S. Merriam.*

## Notes and Jottings.

The introduction of a Government measure into the House of Commons to effect a legal settlement of the ecclesiastical dispute in Scotland is an event of considerable importance for religious organizations everywhere. We do not propose to comment upon the proposals in detail. They have met with general approval, and it may be said briefly that they are a reasonable attempt to combine the equity of the case with generous consideration of the claims of the victorious minority. The important point is that what is equitable and for the public good has been allowed to prevail over the law of trusts. Public opinion has set itself against strict legality and has not been crushed by the lawyers. The principle has been vindicated that the laws were made for the people, and not the people for the laws. At the same time a severe check has been imposed upon the power of the dead hand in religion, and the idea of the church as a living society with an inherent power of growth and development has won a signal triumph.

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But at the time at which these notes are written the fate of the measure is still in the balance. It has been complicated—in our judgment, most unfortunately complicated—with clauses granting relief in the matter of clerical subscription to the Established Church of Scotland. The object is a very laudable one, and, speaking generally, we are prepared to support it heartily; but it cann t be maintained that it is non-contentious or that it is demanded by public opinion as a matter of urgent necessity. It is difficult to see on what grounds of policy the Government has introduced it in this fashion, and the ominous suggestion has been made that it will be used ultimately as an excuse for dropping the whole bill and throwing the responsibility upon the Opposition. We find it hard to believe in the possibility of such sinister designs; but undoubtedly the Government would be well advised to take the Free Church part of the bill separately and entirely on its own merits. There will be no hardship if some sensitive clerical consciences have to wait for relief until public opinion has had time to consider the whole subject of self government in its relation to an established church. Meanwhile the ecclesiastical anarchy is full of menace to many of the best elements in Scottish life, and it is the business of statesmen to secure a prompt settlement.

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It is curious to notice the fervent protestations of orthodoxy which are made from time to time by some of the leaders of the United Free Church. Apparently they do not see that they can only justify their position by abandoning the old idea of orthodoxy altogether. A living church, loyal to the principle of doctrinal development, and an unchanging credal authority are conceptions which it is not easy to combine. What amount of deviation from the standards is permissible within the pale of orthodoxy? On what principle are the various elements of the faith to be divided into the essential and the non-essential? How is it possible to accept a precise and sharply defined statement of belief like the Westminster Confession in general terms? These are questions which we are bound to ask, and as soon as we ask them the idea of orthodoxy breaks helplessly in our hands. Apparently the United Free Church does not realise what is involved in its claim of freedom to grow. It wants to be guided by the living mind of Christ into larger truth and fuller life, and to keep at the same time its old-fashioned reputation for soundness. Its misfortune is that the two things are incompatible. We wish it greater courage to go forward into the full freedom of the truth.

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It is an old device to make up for lack of reason by loudness of assertion. There are many voices at the present time which are trying to discredit knowledge, critical judgment, and quiet reasonableness in questions of religious thought. The method adopted is not to meet reason with reason, but simply to tell the popular audience in very positive tones that criticism is discredited or to paint melodramatic pictures of the consequences of not accepting some particular fact or doctrine. The trivial and essentially vulgar book called "When it was Dark" is of this kind. It is an appeal to the

ignorance and prejudice of the thoughtless crowd. Apparently critics and preachers who speak in this way do not see how terribly they are playing into the hands of the materialist and the atheist. Quite recently the Moderator, preaching to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, stated positively that without a belief in the Godhead of Christ, and he was speaking of it in the hard and metaphysical sense of the doctrine, both theism and morality must go. It is a new and terribly insidious form of irreligion. The avowed atheist who worships the moral ideal seems to us to be much nearer to the mind of Christ. All spiritual religion must begin in reverence for the spiritual nature of man and its fundamental relationship to the divine. To throw away that, or even to disparage it in the supposed interests of dogmatic truth, is simply to abandon Christianity altogether.

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It is refreshing to turn from these fireworks of an ignorant and materialized religion to the calm, deep spirituality of a little book by Dr. Hunter called "The Coming Church." With all his well-known eloquence and force he unfolds his ideal of the true Church, broad in sympathy, reverent in worship, unfettered in thought, reflecting in all its rich variety the mind of Christ, broad-based upon Christian discipleship alone. "The Church we need," he writes, "is a Church that stands for the simplicity and sufficiency of the religion of Jesus Christ, calling itself by no name but one. Every such name as Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, Baptist, Unitarian, is a derogation. Is Christ divided? Nothing is gained by setting up one church against another, and by using names to separate and distinguish men who are one in their spiritual aspirations and aims, in the reverences, loyalties, and hopes of the Christian discipleship. Denominationalism has done about all the good work it can do. It has borne its witness; let it now fade and pass away." Here is the kernel of Dr. Hunter's pl a. It does not belong to the world of policies. It is a breath from the world of the ideal. It is the word of a man who is filled with a glorious hope. We commend it heartily to our readers.

# Sunday School Lessons.

## IV.

## JOHN THE BAPTIST.

LESSON TEXT.—"The voice of one crying in the wilderness."—*Matthew iii. 3. Also Isaiah xl. 3.*

### I. THE GREAT AWAKENING.

Just before the appearance of Jesus, supposed to be then thirty years of age, a great sensation was made in Palestine. A rumour started that a holy, inspired messenger had come, announcing the Messiah. As we have said in the last lesson, the people were in a feverish state of mind, looking for something to come which would be of benefit to them in their oppressed condition. This herald called himself "a voice in the wilderness," telling the people to prepare the way of the Lord. Many believed that it was Elisha come to life again, because there had been such a prophecy; others declared it was the Messiah himself at last arrived to bring Israel into power. The times were full of wrong-doing, and against the corruption then prevailing this John the Baptist fiercely spoke: "Repent of your sins, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He foretold terrible calamities, described the Messiah as having a fan in his hand to winnow the chaff and the wheat, and said the axe was laid to the tree. Crowds went out of the towns and cities to hear him, and great excitement prevailed.

### II. HISTORY OF JOHN.

This hermit of the desert received the name "Baptist" because of what he did when he made disciples. Those who wished to belong to his company were obliged to say that they were sorry for their sins, and then be baptized. This was done by being plunged into the water completely. John the Baptist seems to have been set apart from childhood for a religious mission. He was made a Nazarite; that is, he did not allow himslf the usual pleasures or even habits of life, and followed a severe training which some would call starvation and poverty. Then after this he spent a long time in the great Jewish desert, "the wilderness of Judea," where everything was lonesome, bare and dreary. He led a hermit life,—fasted often, lived on locusts and wild honey (common in that wild region), dressed in a garment of camel's hair, with a broad leathern girdle. He had some followers with him before he made his appearance in public, and they studied and prayed and fasted together. No doubt, their chief thought was the wickedness of the Jews, and how Palestine could be waked up to realise its shame and danger. Just what this rugged, wonderful man meant by baptism we will consider in the next lesson. What we need now is to have a clear, strong picture of the

preacher himself. He denounced the Pharisees in the bitterest words, calling them "vipers"; and his warnings rang like thunderbolts. We can imagine his wild, fierce look as he stood with the wilderness behind him and the Jordan flowing before him, stretching out his arms, threatening and calling at the same time,—a most startling figure and message. Jesus spoke in a rebuking way to the people who were disappointed in John's appearance: "What went ye out into the wilderness to behold?" "A reed shaken with the wind?" "A man clothed in soft raiment?" "Nay, a prophet, and much more than a prophet,"—meaning, no doubt, that John represented something near at hand, and in himself expressed that which should rapidly come to pass. We must not think of this strange character as being old: he was about the same age of Jesus, born, as we are told, less than a year before him. He had the fire of youthful manhood, with the wisdom of an intense experience during his secluded life.

III. Relations to Jesus.

It is not easy to say just what these were. Farrar and others claim that Jesus and John were cousins. There is also trouble in deciding just what was written about this in later years and what was actually spoken by Jesus and by John concerning each other. Jesus heard of the doings of John, and went to him. We do not know how long they were together before the baptism. It is plain enough that Jesus admired the bold, noble stand which John took, and found him in harmony up to a certain degree with his own views. One was the root, and the other was the blossom: one was the law, the other was the gospel.

IV. Character and Mission.

Summing up, then, we see how John the Baptist was the ploughshare turning up the hard soil into which the great teacher cast his seed. "The voice in the wilderness" was indeed a rough, loud one; but it came to waken the dead. The passionate cry, the glowing eyes, the outstretched arms, the terrible denunciations, concealed a heart of sympathy with human kind. John, like Jesus, hated nothing but hypocrisy and fashionable meanness. He thought but little of himself, denied that he was Messiah or great prophet: he spoke of one to come, and prophesied that the great awakening would result in new glory and honour to the people of his beloved race.

V. Class Talks.

Why were the people so ready to flock to hear John? Have you ideas about monks and hermits? Did you ever see a "hermit"? Are not these characters more common in Eastern lands than here? Can you think of any others in history who resemble John? Do you suppose that he thought Jesus to be the Messiah at once?

VI. Lesson Topics and Review.

I. The cry of John the Baptist.
II. His way of living.
III. The form he used.
IV. Geography of the events.
V. Causes for so much stir.
VI. Hermit life.
VII. "Kingdom of heaven."

VII. Suggestions to Teachers and References.

Do justice to the character of this unselfish, fearless man. Lead the scholars to see how earnest he was for the good of the people. Renan's "Life of Jesus," *John the Baptist*, is a fluent, free portrait; but caution must be used in accepting the flowery colours. The same, in another direction, may be said of Canon Farrar's evangelical drawing. Both are high-coloured.

T. H.

## Three Prayers.

Be Thou present with me, O Lord, in every time and place. Let this be my consolation, to be cheerfully willing to do without all human comfort. And, if Thy consolation be wanting, let Thy will and just trial of me be unto me as the greatest comfort—Amen.

Thomas a Kempis.

Almighty God, the Refuge of all that are distressed, grant unto us that, in all trouble of this our mortal life, we may flee to the knowledge of Thy loving kindness and tender mercy; that so, sheltering ourselves therein, the storms of life may pass over us, and not shake the peace of God that is within us. Whatsoever this life may bring us, grant that it may never take from us the full faith that Thou art our Father. Grant us Thy light, that we may have life—Amen.

George Dawson.

O Lord, whom all Thy good creatures bless and praise according to Thy gift unto each of them, grant, we pray Thee, that we on whom Thou hast bestowed reason and speech may ever bless Thee with hearts and lips, and may of Thine infinite mercy inherit a blessing, even the eternal blessedness of heaven—Amen.

Christiana G. Rossetti.

## News from the Field.

There are not, perhaps, as many movements as usual among our Ministers to record. *Mr. W. T. Bushrod* has been inducted at *Chorley*, the *Rev. J. M. Barnes* has been welcomed at *King's Lynn*, and the *Rev. Felix Taylor* at *Richmond*. The *Rev. H. S. Taylor* has resigned his charge at *Dukinfield*, after a pastorate of twenty years.

The old Chapel at *Long Sutton* has been re-opened for worship, and on May 25th, celebrated its 205th Anniversary.

Another of our Domestic Missions, that at the North End of *Liverpool*, has been telling the story of its useful work.

A very useful Institution—only six years old, has held its Annual Meeting—the *Ministerial* Fellowship. It has now 126 members, and in addition to assisting a number of Ministers who were temporarily without a charge, it has accumulated a capital of upwards of £400. This Fellowship, which has already proved so valuable to not a few of our Ministers, is now acting as a friendly intermediatory between Ministers and Congregations, and making them known to each other to the great benefit of both.

*Dr. Warschauer* has made his exchange from our Ministry at *Clifton* into the Congregational body at *Anerley*, where we hope he may do good work, and find a sphere more suitable to his aims and gifts than he found in our smaller and poor Communion. His career will be observed with friendly curiosity.

Bazaars have been held in aid of the Congregations in *Kentish Town*, and in *Lancaster*, in both cases with a considerable measure of success. *Dromore* has opened its new organ, which has cost upwards of £350, and has been enabled to enrich its regular service of praise.

There was a great gathering in the *Free Trade Hall, Manchester*, on Whit Sunday, when the *Rev. W. Holmeshaw* conducted a striking service among the 5,000 Sunday School Children and Teachers who crowded the spacious and beautiful Hall. This is always an inspiring gathering, and is a great religious festival eagerly looked forward to and celebrated by the S. Schools in the *Manchester* District.

At *Holywood* in Ireland a S. School Conference has been held, which seems to have been well attended and to have attracted a large and interested gathering.

Our *Yorkshire* friends have met in *Lydgate* and taken further steps in advance. They are well at work with their new Missioners, *Mr. Ellis* and *Mr. Cross*, and they are facing the future with a staff of new officers who are ready for earnest work, and are animated with the right spirit.

But over and above all our doings during the last few weeks, have been the gatherings in *London* in connection with the Anniversaries of the Sunday School Association, and the British and Foreign Association. These gatherings were large, earnest, and animated. The Sunday School story of the year was very encouraging, good work has been done. Excellent Manuals have been published. A high ideal has been kept before Teachers and Scholars alike, and at the various meetings which were well attended, an excellent spirit prevailed, and a fine optimism animated every man and woman who took part in the proceedings.

The British and Foreign Association began as usual with a service, when *Rev. J. Collins Odgers* was the preacher. We could have wished that the opportunity of so large a gathering had been seized to set forth a great ideal and aim, and that a brave manifesto had been uttered which would have rung through the world to-day; as it was, we heard simple and kindly words, and a sermon suited to the common wants of any ordinary occasion was preached by an amiable and much respected Minister. But nothing daunted, the audience went away to its various meetings with high courage and unflagging zeal.

All the Meetings, Conferences, and Social Functions were alive and alert, and the general and Ministerial assemblies were cheery and pleasing. Our Temperance friends reached a higher water mark than usual, and the Association itself, daringly passed a resolution in favour of Peace.

But the functions which lifted the meetings into the highest regions were the Essex Hall Lecture by Professor Jones of Glasgow University; the Paper of Dr. Mellone on Martineau and Newman; and the address on "Prayer" by the Rev. A. W. Fox at the Devotional Service; the deliverance by the Rev. F. K. Freeston on Attendance at Public Worship. The Meeting of Ministers was larger than usual, and the topics discussed were interesting and varied.

Altogether, the Associations deserve to be congratulated for their good work and lofty courage.

Once more we have to tell of gracious men and women of ripe age and rich experience, who have left our earthly ranks and entered the higher sphere. Among these are *Mrs. Elizabeth Turner* of *Ditchling*, *Mr. John Waren* of *Nottingham*, and *Mrs. Maltby* of *Gt. Hucklow*. But a sad note is sounded when a young, energetic, and devoted young man of honoured name and work like *Wm. McCalmont* of *Belfast* is suddenly called away. His place will be hard to fill. We sympathise with all the sorrowers who are left, but we know that the dear ones are among the shining hosts. God's comfort will come to us, and His gladness and joy have burst upon those who have passed on.

SCRUTATOR.

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